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#### CHAPTER XXVII.

## STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

### § 1. General.

1. Development of Australian Statistics.—(i) Crown Colony Blue Books. The statistical organization of the Australian States owes its origin to the "Blue Books" which in the Crown Colony days were prepared annually for the information of the Colonial Office, London. These documents were intended rather for administrative purposes than as seconds of statistical data, but their use in this latter respect has in many cases been quite as important as their primary purpose.

The account of the growth and progress of an infant colony furnished by a series of these Blue Books is highly informative, and although some matters of great importance were left untouched, or treated insufficiently, the limited range of economic activities was usually fairly covered, and an interesting index of material development was furnished.

Apart from their specific utility, these Blue Books served the purpose of a basis on which the later statistical publications were fashioned, and they thus furnished for the British Empire an element of uniformity in the matter of statistical compilation.

- (ii) Statistical Registers. Following the advent of Responsible Government which was granted during the period 1851-60 to all the Australian States except Western Australia—and to that State in 1890—the "Blue Book" was succeeded by a publication which in all cases was known as the "Statistical Register." In many respects this was the old Blue Book in a new guise. The information contained was in most cases a summary of the more important data obtainable as by-products from the activities of the various administrative departments of the Government. Gradually, however, statistical consciou ness emerged, and the necessity for special effort in the compilation of such data was realized. The most important of the early evidences of definite statistical effort was the taking of the population Censuses which in all the States were initiated under the Crown Colony regime. This for long furnished the sole example of extensive governmental organization for a purely statistical purpose; in practically all other cases the statistics were by-products. The growing need for quantitative data concerning the progress of the several young communities of Australia led to improvement in the methods of statistical record, and gradually to the recognition of an officer of the public service whose principal duty was that of preparing and publishing such data. It was probably due to the circumstance that the office of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages had usually been employed as head-quarters for the intermittent Censuses that this officer in many of the States was selected as the Statistician, and in some instances received that or a similar title in addition to his title of Registrar-General.
- (iii) Prominent State Statisticians. Amongst the various holders of the position of Government Statistician, or its equivalent, three stand out prominently in respect of their efforts to place Australian Statistics on a satisfactory basis. The earliest of these was Mr. H. H. Hayter, who filled the position of Government Statist of Victoria from 1873 until his death in 1895. Under his control the "Victorian Year Book" and the Statistical Bureau were initiated, many marked improvements were effected in the collection and tabulation of statistical data, and a reputation for careful investigation and lucid interpretation was established. Under his guidance excellent statistical data for Australasia were compiled annually, and he was an untiring worker in the cause of statistical uniformity. His nosological index for the classification of causes of death was long a standard work in the field of Vital Statistics in Australia. The next in point of time of the three mentioned above was Mr. R. M. Johnston, who filled the position of Government Statistician in Tasmania from 1882 until his death in 1918. Like Mr. Hayter, he was a keen advocate of uniformity throughout Australia in the compilation of statistics, and gave great assistance at various statistical conferences, particularly in the matter

of classification of data. He was a man of diversified attainments, and his influence on the development of statistical investigation in Australia was considerable. The third of the State statisticians indicated was Mr. T. A. Coghlan (now the Hon. Sir T. A. Coghlan, K.C.M.G., I.S.O.), who filled the position of Government Statistician in New South Wales from 1886 to 1905, when he resigned to take up other duties. Under his direction many improvements were effected in the statistical compilations of that State, and the Statistical Register issued during and since his time is one of the most complete statistical analyses available of any community. A Year Book entitled "The Wealth and Progress of New South Wales" was published by him, and also a publication entitled "The Seven Colonies of Australia," which appeared at intervals of about two years. This latter is of some special interest as its general plan formed the groundwork of the present "Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia." Apart from his individual efforts in the direction of statistical uniformity for Australia, Mr. Coghlan was also strongly in favour of the practice of holding periodical statistical conferences, and assisted at several of these in connexion with census and general statistics.

- (iv) Statistical Conferences. To enable the statisticians of the several States to interchange ideas, and to ensure the attainment of results which would be capable of comparison and would be suitable for the ascertainment of aggregates for Australia, conferences were held from time to time in the several States from as early a date as 1861. There were in all six conferences prior to the formation of the Federal Bureau of Census and Statistics in 1906. These conferences took place respectively in 1861, 1875, 1890, 1900, 1902, and 1903, and in many cases were attended by a representative of New Zealand. By means of them a great improvement in the uniformity of statistical data was effected.
- (v) Federal Bureau. Under the provisions of the Commonwealth Constitution, section 51, sub-section (xi.), power is conferred on the Federal Parliament "to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to Census and Statistics." In compliance with this provision, the Census and Statistics Act 1905 was passed, and in 1906 the Federal Bureau of Census and Statistics was created. The first Federal Statistician was Mr. G. H. Knibbs (now Sir George H. Knibbs, K.B., etc.) who filled the position from 1906 until his appointment in 1921 to the position of Director of the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry. To the task of organizing the work of the new Bureau Mr. Knibbs brought a lengthy and varied experience in important branches of public service in New South Wales, and in the formation of his staff he drew largely upon the staffs of existing State Statistical Offices. One of the earliest steps taken was that of holding in November and December, 1906, a conference with the State statisticians to define the relations between the several Bureaux and to arrange for the interchange of data. The conference was marked by great cordiality between the various representatives, and an extensive series of forms was approved for the supply of data by the States to the Commonwealth. In each case, the State Statistician became the representative in his own State of the Commonwealth Statistician for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Federal Act. Some of the outstanding features of the Bureau's activities during the period of control by Mr. Knibbs were as follows:-
- (a) The initiation and annual publication of the Official Year-Book of the Commonwealth of Australia:
- (b) The annual publication of Statistical Bulletins dealing with the principal activities of the whole of Australia;
- (c) The quarterly (at one time monthly) publication of a Summary of Australian Statistical Data;
- (d) The formation of a Labour and Industrial Branch to record prices, wages, and kindred matters;
  - (e) The taking of population censuses for all Australia in 1911 and 1921;
  - (f) The taking of a special War Census (including a Wealth Census) in 1915;
- (g) The compilation and publication of a series of Life Tables for Australia and its component States, and of monetary tables based thereon.

The vacancy caused by the transfer of Mr. Knibbs was filled in 1922 by the appointment—as from 1st August in that year—of Mr. C. H. Wickens, who had previously filled the position of Supervisor of Census in the Bureau.

(vi) Uniformity of Statistical Control. At various dates since the creation of the Commonwealth, proposals have been made for the unification of statistical compilation in Australia. Under the provisions of the Federal Constitution the item "Census and Statistics" is not allocated exclusively to the Federal Parliament, but is one of those matters in connexion with which powers may be exercised concurrently by Federal and State Legislatures. In the matter of the Census, the States have ceased to function since the Commonwealth undertook the work, but the right of a State to take a Census at any time is not vitiated thereby. In the field of General Statistics, on the other hand, there are now seven separate bureaux operating. As, however, each State bureau is concerned solely with its own territory, and as in many matters the Commonwealth Bureau is largely interested in the presentation of the data for Australia as a whole, there is not a great deal of overlapping or duplication of effort. Such duplication does, however, exist to some extent, especially in the matter of publication, and at conferences of the State Premiers in 1906 and 1918 resolutions were passed in favour of combining Federal and State bureaux, but in each case the idea was subsequently abandoned. At a conference between Federal and State Ministers in May, 1923, the matter was again under consideration, and a resolution in favour of one statistical authority for Australia was passed, the consideration of details to be left to a conference of Commonwealth and State Statisticians. This Conference was held in October, 1923, and formulated a scheme for the transfer of such of the State Bureaux as the Governments concerned desired to hand over to the Commonwealth. The Tasmanian State Bureau was transferred in November 1924; and in some other cases the matter is still under consideration. On the 18th August, 1924, and succeeding days, a conference of the Government Statisticians of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the several Australian States was held in Adelaide to discuss arrangements for increasing the efficiency and uniformity of statistical compilation, and for diminishing the amount of duplication of effort still existing. The results attained were very satisfactory, and are likely to increase the value of the statistical data of the two Dominions.

(vii) Present Organization. The existing organization in respect of the collection tabulation, etc., of statistical data as between the State and Federal Statistical Bureaux, and State and Federal Government Departments, is set forth in the accompanying conspectus.

### PRESENT ORGANIZATION OF STATISTICAL COLLECTION, TABULATION. SUMMARY AND REVIEW.

A .- CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO SUBJECT.

Note.—C.S. = Commonwealth Statistician.
C.D. = Commonwealth Department (non-statistical).

S.S.=State Statistician
S.D.=State Department
(non-statistical).

Sul	bject.	,	Collected by-	Tabulated by—	Australian results sum- marized and reviewed by-
	-		•		
I. Population— (i) Census (ii) Vital Statisti (iii) Migration	 es 	  	C.S. S.D. C.S., C.D. and S.D.	C.S. and S.S. C.S.	C.S. C.S. C.S.
II. Production-					
(i) Land Settlen (ii) Agriculture (iii) Pastoral (iv) Dairying	ent  	 	S.D. S.S.(a) S.S.(a) S.S.(a)	S.D. S.S. S.S. S.S.	C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S.

<sup>(</sup>a) State Police collect original individual returns from owners, occupiers, etc., without charge (except out-of-pocket expenses).

# PRESENT ORGANIZATION OF STATISTICAL COLLECTION, TABULATION. SUMMARY AND REVIEW—continued.

#### A .- CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO SUBJECT-continued.

A.—CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO SUBJECT—continued.					
Subject.		Collected by—	Tabulated by—	Australian results sum- marized and reviewed by—	
II. Production—continued.  (v) Mineral  (vi) Forestry  (vii) Fisheries  (viii) Water Conservation  (ix) Manufacturing		S.D. S.D. S.D. S.D. S.S.(a)	S.D. S.D. S.D. S.D. S.S.	C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S.	
III. Transport and Communication—  (i) Railways—  (a) Government (C'wealth)  (b) Government (State)  (c) Private  (ii) Tramways  (iii) Shipping  (v) Telegraphs  (vi) Telephones  (vii) Aircraft  (viii) Motor Vehicles		C.D. S.D. C.S. C.S. C.D. C.D. C.D. C.D.	C.D. S.D. C.S. C.S. C.S. C.D. C.D. C.D.	C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S.	
IV. Trade and Commerce—  (i) Imports (ii) Exports (iii) Customs (iv) Excise  V. Finance—  (i) Commonwealth		C.D. C.D. C.D. C.D.	C.D. C.D. C.D. C.D.	C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S.	
(ii) State (iii) Private (a) Banking (b) Insurance		S.D. C.S. and S.S. C.S. and S.S.	S.D. C.S. and S.S. C.S. and S.S.	C.S. C.S. C.S.	
VI. Social—  (i) Education  (ii) Hospitals  (iii) Charities  (iv) Judicial	••	S.D. S.S. S.S. S.S.	S.D. S.S. S.S. S.S.	C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S.	
VII. Labour and Industrial— (i) Prices (ii) Wages (iii) Industrial Disputes (iv) Trade Unionism (v) Unemployment		C.S. and S.S. C.S. and S.D. C.S. and S.D. C.S. and S.D. C.S. and S.D.	C.S. and S.S. C.S. and S.D. C.S. and S.D. C.S. and S.D. C.S. and S.D.	C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S. C.S.	
VIII. Local Government		s.s.	S.S.	c.s.	
IX. Miscellaneous—  (i) Electoral		C.D. and S.D. C.D.	C.D. and S.D. C.D.	C.S. C.D.	

<sup>(</sup>a) State Police collect original individual returns from owners, occupiers, etc., without charge (except out-of-pocket expenses).

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### PRESENT ORGANIZATION OF STATISTICAL COLLECTION, TABULATION, SUMMARY, AND REVIEW—continued.

### B.—Classification of Subjects According to Department Responsible for Collection.

Data collected by—					
Commonwealth Statistician.	Commonwealth Department (non-statistical).	State Statist.	State Department (non-statistical).		
Census. Migration (Rail). Railways (Private). Tramways. Aircraft. Banking. Insurance. Prices. Wages. Industrial Disputes. Trade Unionism. Unemployment.	Migration (Sea). Government Railways (C'wealth). Shipping. Posts. Telegraphs. Telephones. Imports. Exports. Customs. Excise. Finance (C'wealth). Electoral (C'wealth). Meteorological.	Agriculture. Pastoral. Dairying. Manufacturing. Banking. Insurance. Hospitals. Charities. Judicial. Prices. Local Government.	Vital Statistics. Land Settlement. Mineral. Government Railways (State). Motor Vehicles. Forestry. Fisheries. Water Conservation. Finance (State). Education. Wages. Industrial Disputes. Trade Unionism. Unemployment. Electoral (State).		

### C.—CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR INITIAL TABULATION.

Commonwealth Statistician.	Commonwealth Department.	State Statist.	State Department.	
Census. Vital Statistics. Migration (Rail and Sea). Railways (Private). Tramways. Shipping. Aircraft. Banking. Insurance. Prices. Wages. Industrial Disputes. Trade Unionism. Unemployment.	Government Railways (C'wealth). Posts. Telegraphs. Telephones. Imports, Exports. Customs. Excise. Finance (C'wealth.) Electoral (C'wealth.) Meteorological.	Vital Statistics. Agriculture. Pastoral. Dairying. Manufacturing. Banking. Insurance. Hospitals. Charities. Judicial. Prices. Local Government.	Land Settlement. Mineral. Government Railways (State). Motor Vehicles. Forestry. Fisheries. Water Conservation. Finance (State). Education. Wages. Industrial Disputes. Trade Unionism. Unemployment. Electoral (State).	

D.—THE AUSTRALIAN RESULTS ARE SUMMARIZED AND THE STATISTICS ARE REVIEWED BY THE COMMONWEALTH STATISTICIAN IN ALL THE CASES ABOVE EXCEPT METEOROLOGICAL STATISTICS WHICH ARE DEALT WITH ENTIRELY BY THE COMMONWEALTH METEOROLOGIST.

<sup>2.</sup> Sources of Information.—The foregoing conspectus gives in concise form the main sources from which general statistical data are obtained. It may be noted that such information is furnished in various ways—(a) Directly, in response to the Commonwealth Statistician's demand; (b) by the State Statisticians who collect directly from individuals or through the medium of police officers or special collectors; (c) by Commonwealth and

State Government Departments either in their Departmental Reports or in response to special inquiries (the Commonwealth Trade and Customs Department supplies returns of Trade, and of Customs and Excise); (d) by scientific and technical experts invited to contribute special articles for the Official Year Book.

In addition, information may be obtained through the State Statisticians acting in the capacity of duly constituted officers under the provisions of the Commonwealth Census and Statistics Act.

#### § 2. Statistical Publications of Australia.

- 1. General.—The official statistical publications of Australia may be divided bibliographically into two main divisions, viz.:—(1) Commonwealth publications dealing both individually and collectively with the several States of the Commonwealth, and (2) State publications dealing with individual States only. Besides these there are many other reports, etc., issued regularly, which though not wholly statistical, necessarily contain a considerable amount of statistical information. The more important of these published to August, 1925, are indicated below.
- 2. Commonwealth Publications.—Commonwealth publications may be grouped under two heads, viz.:—(i) Publications issued by the Commonwealth Statistician, and (ii) Parliamentary and Departmental Reports and Papers.
- (i) Publications issued by the Commonwealth Statistician. The following is a list of the principal statistical publications issued from the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics since its inauguration up to August, 1925:—

Australian Life Tables, 1901–1910. Australian Joint Life Tables, 1901–1910. Census (1911) Bulletins.

Census (1911) Results.—Vols. I., II., and III., with Appendix "Mathematical Theory of Population."

Census (1921) Results.—Bulletins, Nos. 1 to 26. Report, Parts I to XXI.

Finance—Bulletins, 1907 to 1916-17 annually; 1917-18 and 1918-19 (one vol.); 1919-20 and 1920-21 (one vol.); 1921-22; 1922-23; 1923-24.

Labour and Industrial Statistics—Memoranda and Reports, various, to 1913.

Labour Report, annually, 1913 to 1924.

Local Government in Australia—July, 1919.

Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia—Annually, 1907 to present issue (1925).

Oversea Trade, annually, 1906 to 1923-24.

Pocket Compendium of Australian Statistics (formerly Statistical Digest), 1913, 1914, 1916, and 1918 to 1925 annually.

Population and Vital Statistics Bulletins—Reports, various. Commonwealth Demography, 1911 to 1924 annually.

Production-Bulletins, annually, 1906 to 1923-24.

Professional Papers—Various. A full list will be found in Official Year Book No. 13, p. 3.

Quarterly Summary of Australian Statistics—first issue, No. 70, December, 1917, replacing Monthly Summary of Australian Statistics (Bulletins 1 to 69), and incorporating data from earlier publications relating to Labour, Shipping, Trade, Vital Statistics, Oversea Migration, etc.

Social Insurance—Report to the Hon. the Minister of Trade and Customs, 1910.

Social Statistics-Bulletins, 1907 to 1915 annually, and 1918.

Superannuation for the Commonwealth Public Service—Report to the Hon. the Minister for Home Affairs, 1910.

Transport and Communication—Bulletins, 1906, 1908 to 1916 annually; 1919 to 1924 annually.

Wealth—The Private Wealth of Australia and its Growth, as ascertained by various methods, together with a Report of the War Census in 1915.

- (ii) Commonwealth Parliamentary and Departmental Reports and Papers. Lists of the principal official reports and other documents containing statistical information issued from the inauguration of the Commonwealth were given in Year Books up to No. 15, but limits of space preclude the incorporation of this information in the present volume.
- 3. State Publications.—The chief statistical publications of each State are set out hereunder. Limits of space preclude a further enumeration of the various Departmental Reports, statements of accounts, etc., issued by officials, boards, local government bodies, etc., in each State.
  - (a) New South Wales-Statistical Register (annual); Official Year Book of New South Wales (annual); Statesman's Year Book (annual); Vital Statistics (monthly and annual); Statistical Bulletin (monthly to December, 1919, thereafter quarterly).
  - (b) Victoria—Statistical Register (annual to 1916, then discontinued); Victorian Year Book (annual); Vital Statistics (annual and quarterly); Statistical Abstracts (quarterly to 1917).
  - (c) Queensland—Statistical Register (annual); Official Year Book, 1901; A.B.C. of Queensland Statistics (annual); Vital Statistics (annual and monthly).
  - (d) South Australia—Statistical Register (annual); Official Year Book, 1912 and 1913; Statesman's Pocket Year Book (annual); Returns of Births and Deaths (monthly).
  - (e) Western Australia—Statistical Register (annual); Statistical Abstracts (quarterly, previously issued monthly to July, 1917); Pocket Year Book of Western Australia (annual); Circular (monthly), containing Principal
  - (f) Tasmania—Statistical Register (annual); Statesman's Pocket Year Book annual, from 1915; Statistical Summaries (annual); Vital Statistics and Migration (annual and monthly).

### § 3. Bibliography of Recent Works on Australia.

1. General.—In Official Year Book No. 13, a list of the principal general works dealing with Australia and Australian affairs, published from 1901 to 1920, will be found. Of the publications of the first eighteen years of the Commonwealth the more important are now repeated, with a fuller list of works published within the last six years.

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